

CHARLOTTE BUSINESS JOURNAL

OCTOBER 29, 2010

www.charlottebusinessjournal.com • \$2.00

Hedge fund administrator to expand from Charlotte

City's financial work force key in ISIS' decision to make this its U.S. home

ADAM O'DANIEL | STAFF WRITER

aodaniel@bizjournals.com

Edith Conyers, co-founder and president of ISIS Fund Services, admits her hedge fund administration company is a little different.

The firm is expanding by opening a Charlotte office. But unlike many U.S. administrators that expand by opening offshore offices, ISIS is moving onshore. The company is based in Bermuda. Charlotte will be its first operation in this country.



Conyers

And ISIS profits? Many are directed to a charitable foundation that helps children in third-world countries.

"We have a slightly different slant to how we do things," Conyers says.

ISIS Fund Services USA Inc. recently opened its Charlotte office to spearhead a U.S. expansion. Conyers says the operation will seek to serve U.S. hedge funds and private-equity groups that need to outsource accounting, investor servicing, tax services, corporate governance and corporate secretary work.

The firm will start small here with only a few employees. But Conyers says all future ISIS expansion in the United States is slated for Charlotte.

Conyers founded ISIS Fund Services in 2007 after a career with Forum Financial Group in Portland, Ore., and Citigroup Inc.

The company now has about \$2.5 billion in funds under administration. It has grown by servicing offshore funds in Bermuda, the Cayman Islands and the British Virgin Islands.

Conyers says she recently saw a trend developing in which U.S. hedge funds were seeking to outsource more functions of their business. So she began considering a U.S. division.

This year, Conyers hired Kristin Steele to lead the U.S. expansion. Steele



Steele

had recently followed her husband to a job in Charlotte. So naturally she suggested the Queen City as a locale for ISIS to consider. What Conyers found was a city brimming with affordable office space and a readily available, experienced financial work force.

"To succeed in this industry, you have to have really good people and resources," she says. "Charlotte seemed the obvious choice. Not only because Kristin was already there. But also because of the talent and resources."

ISIS is the second hedge fund administrator to open a Charlotte office this year. In June, Citco Hedge Fund Services announced it would open a major operation here, with plans to hire 250 employees over the next five years. Those jobs will pay an average of more than \$78,000 per year, plus benefits. Citco is eligible for \$4 million in tax incentives.

"This corroborates Charlotte as a great place for financial services to do business," Justin Hunt, vice president of economic development at the Charlotte Chamber, says of the two similar firms choosing the Queen City. The chamber assisted ISIS in its expansion here.

The firm also met with local government and education officials. But it will receive no public incentives to open the Charlotte office.

ISIS Fund Services is indirectly linked to the ISIS Foundation, a Bermuda-based charity. ISIS Fund Services funnels profits from its business back to the foundation, to cover its operating expenses. As a result, the foundation is able to direct all contributions directly to needy children since administrative costs are paid for by the fund administration work.

Conyers says the ISIS Foundation focuses on improving the lives of children in Nepal and Uganda. Among the charitable endeavors, ISIS supports homes for trafficked children in Kathmandu, helps finance a children's home in Kampala and has built, trained and outfitted a neonatal intensive care unit in rural Africa.

QUICKINFO

HEDGE FUND GROUPS TARGET CHARLOTTE

•**ISIS Fund Services:**

Bermuda-based operation will build its U.S. presence from Charlotte.

•**Citco Hedge Fund Services:**

Plans to grow to 250 employees here within five years.